

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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R 101618Z OCT 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

INFO AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 242044

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: CVIS, PFOR, IN

SUBJECT: ANANDA MARG

REF: NEW DELHI 13085

1. WE HAVE CAREFULLY REVIEWED YOUR CONCERNS AND GOI
ALLEGATIONS AGAINST ANANDA MARG IN ASSESSING HOW TO DEAL
WITH THREE MARGI APPLICANTS FOR IMMIGRANT VISAS AS MIN-
ISTERS OF RELIGION. THE USG OBVIOUSLY HAS NO ROLE TO
PLAY IN INDIAN HANDLING OF ANANDA MARG CASES WHICH DEAL
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WITH INDIAN NATIONALS, BUT DOES OF COURSE HAVE RESPONSIBIL-

ITY FOR PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO ANY AMCIT MEMBERS SHOULD THEY RUN AFOUL OF INDIAN AUTHORITIES. IN THIS REGARD BECAUSE OF PRESENT SITUATION REGARDING MARG, WE ARE OFFICIALLY ADVISING MARG REPRESENTATIVES IN WASHINGTON THAT U.S. CITIZEN MEMBERS RUN A RISK OF INDIAN GOVERNMENT LEGAL ACTION SHOULD THEY ENTER OR TRANSIT INDIA AT THIS TIME.

2. CASES OF THREE VISA APPLICANTS IN KATHMANDU POSE SEPARATE PROBLEM. WE RECOGNIZE THERE IS POSSIBILITY OF GOI CRITICISM IF WE ADMIT THEM AS MINISTERS IN VIEW OF INDIAN BANNING OF MARG. HOWEVER, WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY EVIDENCE INDICATING ILLEGAL MARG ACTIVITIES IN THE

U.S. INDIAN EMBASSY OFFICIALS IN TALKING WITH US HAVE ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS PRIOR TO EMERGENCY COMMENTED THAT AMERICAN MARGIS WERE QUITE HARMLESS AND WELL-INTENTIONED.

3. IN THE EVENT GOI DECIDES TO STAGE SHOW TRIAL AGAINST MARG WE ASSUME THAT U.S. WILL INEVITABLY BE DRAGGED INTO PICTURE BY PRO-COMMUNIST ELEMENTS WHICH FOR PAST FEW YEARS HAVE ALLEGED THAT ANANDA MARG WAS AFFILIATED WITH CIA AND U.S. ANANDA MARG WAS FUNNELING MONEY TO MARG HEADQUARTERS IN INDIA. AMERICAN BRANCH WAS IN FACT SENDING MONEY TO INDIA, MUCH AS OTHER INDIAN SECTS HERE LIKE GURU MAHARAJI DIVINE LIGHT GROUP OR INDEED THE WAY ANY INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS ORDER TRANSMITS FUNDS TO ITS HEADQUARTERS. HOWEVER, MARG MEMBERS HAVE NEVER MADE ANY SECRET ABOUT THIS.

4. IN 1972, IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE LOOKED INTO THE MARG AND FOUND IT TO BE A BONAFIDE RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION. FURTHER WE UNDERSTAND MARG IS SO RECOGNIZED IN CANADA, MEXICO AND GERMANY. WHATEVER IT IS IN INDIA, U.S. MARG APPEARS TO BE JUST ANOTHER INDIAN RELIGIOUS SECT WHICH HAS ATTRACTED A SMALL NUMBER OF U.S. FOLLOWERS, MUCH AS THE SIKHS OR HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT. THE MARG IN THE U.S., TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, EMPHASIZES SOCIAL SERVICE AND GOOD WORKS AND SEES ITSELF AS A SORT OF LATTER DAY DOMESTIC PEACE CORPS. WE HAVE CONFIDENTIAL

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THE OPTION OF REOPENING THE MARG'S STATUS BY INITIATING AN SY INVESTIGATION. THIS WOULD TAKE SIX MONTHS TO A YEAR AND ON THE BASIS OF NEA/INS CONTACTS WITH MARGIS OVER PAST TWO YEARS, DOES NOT PROMISE ANY NEW REVELATIONS. UNSUBSTANTIATED INDIAN ALLEGATIONS ABOUT THE MARG PROVIDE NO PRIMA FACIE BASIS TO ALTER THE USG READING OF MARG, BASED ON ITS ACTIVITIES IN THE U.S.

5. TO MAKE A CASE AGAINST THE MARG, WE WOULD HAVE TO RELY PRINCIPALLY ON EVIDENCE SUPPLIED BY THE GOI. UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, THIS WOULD BE HIGHLY SUSPECT IN THE U.S.

6. MOREOVER, THE MARG MEMBERS HERE HAVE BEEN ACTIVE WITH THE U.S. CONGRESS AND WE FEEL CERTAIN THAT USG ACCEPTANCE OF INDIAN ALLEGATIONS IN THE ABSENCE OF OTHER EVIDENCE WOULD RAISE QUESTIONS ON THE HILL. AT THIS POINT, WE DO NOT HAVE A SUFFICIENT CASE AGAINST MARG IN THE U.S. TO COUNTER ALLEGATIONS THAT THE USG WAS UNFAIRLY THROTTLING RIGHTS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN ORDER TO COZY UP TO AUTHORITARIAN REGIME IN INDIA SHOULD WE SEEK REVERSAL OF 1972 RULING THAT MARG IS BONA FIDE RELIGIOUS GROUP.

7. THEREFORE, WE CONCLUDE THAT THE MOST ADVISABLE COURSE OF ACTION IS TO PROCESS THE THREE APPLICANTS IN KATHMANDU AS MINISTERS OF RELIGION. IF WE ARE SATISFIED THAT THEY WILL IN FACT PERFORM THESE FUNCTIONS, AND ARE NOT COMING TO THE U.S. FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES, (AND ARE ELIGIBLE IN ALL OTHER RESPECTS) THEY APPEAR ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL IMMIGRANT VISAS.

8. THE INDIANS ARE FAMILIAR WITH USG REGULATIONS AND SHOULD THEY COMPLAIN, WE CAN TELL THEM THE VISAS WERE ISSUED IN STRICT ACCORDANCE WITH U.S. IMMIGRATION LAW AND SOLELY ON THE GROUNDS THAT THESE PARTICULAR APPLICANTS ARE TO PERFORM RELIGIOUS FUNCTIONS IN THE U.S.

9. RESPONSE TO KATHMANDU 4328 BEING HANDLED BY SEPTTEL. KISSINGER

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